

## THE FUNCTION OF THE UNIVERSITIES

"A sound schooling would teach manner of thought rather than matter" (*South Wind*).

Like all the institutions of democracy, the British Universities are a compromise. The system is pernicious, yet not all the results are bad. In spite of themselves, the British Universities have a real contribution to make to the world in which I believe, but this contribution is disregarded by the State and does not form part of the official programme. For the things in my education which I value most seem never to have been intended, but to be a chance birth, a shoot from a stock which is now neglected, a gift for the lucky, not to be discovered by the dutiful.

The Corporateness of the Universities is a vanished thing. Learning is a commodity to be bought and sold. Master and pupil meet like employer and employee, mutually hostile: work is demanded and produced by coercion. Yet neither are to blame. Both are at the mercy of impersonal forces which are far more powerful, at the moment beyond their control.

Yet, haphazard, at odd occasions, the old comradeship is revived. Perhaps during a lecture, the Professor can forget that he is a machine, and Adam will rib. But lectures are dreary things and the time of my most regular attendance I cannot remember to have heard above two good ones in a week. The five minutes hazarding of ideas at the end of the lecture are worth more than the lecture itself. The mass product suits nobody and nothing, but the fatuity of University examiners and examinees.

The nearest approach to the old corporate unity—and I think the most valuable part of modern University education—is the free mixing of students with students, and students with staff, that takes place in the various societies which have been carved out of the orthodox University structure. These can hardly be described as existing by the side of the lecture system, as supplementing the syllabus, the list of official subjects. They do, most certainly, fill up an important gap, but all the time they are fighting officialdom in sheer defence of their own existence, hampered by lack of room and of time and liable to be smothered by the folds of all-encompassing officialdom.

What would I have been taught? After all, says one, Universities are institutions for teaching highly technical subjects and if you abolished these what would you teach in their place? But I would abolish nothing. On

the contrary, I should add to the number of highly technical subjects which are taught. There are techniques of whose existence Southampton is ignorant. There are others which are taught here as "subjects" which ought to be part of the mental make-up of every student. Where are the highly conscious fashioners of themselves and of society of whom I dream. The modern student is a commodity designed to circulate in a certain market. He has neither will nor purpose beyond those selected for him by a blind and capricious environment. Whose the hand at the controls? Not ours. We have not the technique of mastery. The science of society and of ourselves is to all effect untought . . . extra muris . . . outside our smug little walls. Our democratic vote is a suicidal weapon in our hands. But in a more highly developed and self-conscious society, a society controlling its own development, these "new" techniques and sciences will have their place on the curriculum. The structure of the Universities is inextricably linked with the structure of the State. The older Universities, Oxford and Cambridge, still retain some of the dignity of learning. A learning which although only designed for a small and leisured class, was the learning of men free, to whom learning was a means of enjoying greater freedom. But with the rise of the modern industrial state and the rise of the modern University, learning became one of the attributes of a higher stratum of slaves . . . learning just sufficient to keep the cogs of industry turning, just sufficient to direct the lower strata to rear them. The lower strata of slaves never pass beyond the elementary school, the middle strata acquires a little general knowledge and leaves the secondary school with a certificate of sufficiency, the higher pass on to the University and realize their own limitations.

The only way to destroy this pernicious system is to destroy the State. The State which makes of the University a factory, from which we pass, rubber-stamped "cannon-fodder." The only way to save ourselves is to create a new State. A State in which man bestrides the machine. Our main reform lies outside the University.

But at the same time we who realize most what is wrong, we of the younger generation, must be most militant inside the Universities. It is a childish attitude merely to complain of what the authorities are doing or not doing. Action must follow complaint or

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## STUDENTS ABROAD

A Visit to Germany, July—August, 1939.

Although I cannot claim the distinction of being in enemy territory when war began, I missed this experience by only a few days, returning to England at the end of last August. Looking back on events from a distance of six months and from the shores of my own country, I realize that the experience was an interesting one; at the time events moved so swiftly that it was a little difficult to grasp what was really happening, until I found myself disembarking at Dover a month before my intended return.

One might suppose that life in Germany during the weeks before the September crisis would be more coloured than usual with Nazi propaganda. In actual fact it was not difficult to forget about the political situation for days at a time—partially, no doubt, owing to the fact that we were buried in the heart of the country, six miles from the station, twenty miles from Breslau, the nearest town of any importance—and thirty miles from the Polish frontier. The average German is as little interested in politics as his English counterpart. To be sure, they all hail Hitler at every conceivable opportunity, but it is a formula that means little more than the more conservative "Guten Tag." So I hailed Hitler without any scruples and listened as politely as possible to German criticisms of English politics as interpreted by Goebbels. I was fortunate in staying with a family whose sentiments, if not definitely anti-Nazi, were hardly more than lukewarm towards the Hitler regime. From them I learnt of the real improvement in the standard of living brought about since the Nazis came into power. It is certainly true that, on the surface at any rate, there is little real want in the country. They proudly claimed that unemployment was non-existent, but this statement, I found, had to be accepted with reservation. They were ready to give excellent reasons for Denzigs's incorporation into the Reich; about Austria and Czecho-Slovakia they maintained a discreet silence. Everyone was quite sure that there would not be a war—the Poles, who committed so many atrocities daily on the long-suffering German minority within their frontiers, would be sure to strike first, in which case England would be released from her obligations towards them.

I was talking to a schoolmaster one day—a fervent Nazi. Among

other things he told me in all good faith that Germany won the last war. Other small incidents—some of them rather amusing—helped to throw light on Germany's attitude to England. One Sunday in church, for instance, the pastor took as his text the story of the Pharisee who said, "I thank God I am not as other men are." In a solemn and impressive tone he said, "We must all be very careful not to fall into the same sin as this Pharisee. Although we are so proud to be Germans we must take great care not to say, 'Thank God, we are not as the English are.'"

I went into a bookshop in Breslau and in all innocence asked for a book by Thomas Mann. I was greeted by a horrified silence. Luckily the bookseller happened to know my companions, and so he explained in a lowered voice that for a German to ask for the book would have been evidence enough to send him to a concentration camp. Thomas Mann is a social democrat.

It was surprisingly easy, however, in spite of the political tension, to forget about "wars and rumours of wars" and to make the most of the holiday. I took part in the work of the Arbeitsdienst on the farm—on condition, as my hosts said, that I did not write a letter to the *Times* complaining about English girls enticed to Germany and forced to work! I worked for three days from 2 p.m. till 8, and sympathised with the German students who had already been working for five hours—from 6 a.m. till eleven. We were allowed an interval of half an hour for tea. However, a sheaf of corn makes a convenient shelter, and the Herr Inspektor rode a very noisy motor-bike, so the tea interval was usually prolonged somewhat beyond the official time! Visits to the cinema—held once a fortnight in a room at the back of the "Gasthaus"—were an event in the village. We also paid a visit to the Heimatsfest at Kanth, the neighbouring town. Tennis and bathing parties took place frequently, and also shopping expeditions to Breslau—I remember one memorable occasion when I missed the one and only bus from the station back to the village, and had to be fetched by the pony and trap! Another vivid recollection is the

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# WESSEX NEWS

Tuesday, March 5th, 1940.

Offices:

STUDENTS' UNION, UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, SOUTHAMPTON

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Sub-Editor—ELIZABETH NEWMAN.

Sports Editor—A. G. BAYLIS.

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G. A. THOMPSON.

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H. F. G. ANDREWS.

## Editorial.

When we were prevailed upon last term to undertake this office, knowing full well that it was beyond our powers and believing that we were answering the call of Duty, that rather vague and multifarious patron deity of the Englishman, we urged you to answer her Call and carry on as before, maintaining the old traditions and upholding our Name. This term we suggested a way—but alas and alas! The burden upon our shoulders had robbed us of our potent sense of humour, and an article written without the slightest pretence of good faith and couched in the most clumsy sarcasm imaginable was held up as a piece of trickery comparable only with the rascally Treaties of the last half-century. But it is not our intention to compose polemics on "petty and private fads"; we must steel our hearts still more and must not be compelled to say:

Nessun maggior dolore  
Che ricordarsi del tempo felice  
Nella miseria...

A certain member of Staff has enquired what is the normal weather in Southampton? For he has always been told that this weather is very exceptional, nothing like it since years... Which is obviously the right answer, for the norm in Southampton is exceptional, as with our College: none of the three terms resembles the other two, and this has term perhaps been the most exceptional of them all. Our perspective is wrong, of course, but we happen to be living in it, which is what matters, despite all the disputations of philosophers, metaphysicians et hoc genus omne. We have been told (must we have it again?) so often ex cathedra, that when you live on top of a volcano, you must put your shoulders to the wheel and your backs into it, all triviality—and frivolity must be laid aside and never must we say:

Omittamus studium,  
Dulce est desipere...

but we think that They only say it so often lest we, who are really very serious-minded folk, should forget that it is "sweet to play the fool"—in the right place, as the first poet ended it. The term began late and finishes early, our ranks are being depleted, and the rest of it, but we look forward, as we always do, to the Summer and Cricket.

## Correspondence

To the Editor of "Wessex News."

Dear Sir,

I realize that it is sometimes difficult for an Editor to fill his pages. I well know that irritation is a stimulant, and if carried to a sufficient degree will bring forth protest which, expressed in suitable language, may look fine and controversial in a correspondence column. I hope this was the only motive behind your last two editorials, but even so I cannot let them pass uncriticized.

Briefly, in one issue you indicate the cause of the rot—our lecture system chains us to the sixth form (is that so bad a place?) and we make schoolmasters of our lecturers. Subsequently you suggest a solution—that our teachers should spoon-feed us very like second-formers, so that we may respond more thoroughly to the University of London's emetic.

While not presuming to question your reasoning, I should like to state what I believe to be a real cause of the "lack of enthusiasm" you find in us, and to remove some of the mud you have cast on lecturer and lectured alike.

Our trouble—a widespread one in the younger, smaller, poorer universities—is that of unequal development. Physically and emotionally, we are adults; intellectually we are beyond the average of our generation, but economically we are as children. Few of us are lucky enough to have the private allowance, scholarship or grant sufficient to enable us to keep up with our non-material needs. Thus earthbound, we indulge, maybe, in the smuttiness and puerilities which make Refec tea so distasteful to you (do they?). I think this fact may explain for you many of our anomalies and failings. Happily our present condition appears to have no lasting effect on us, and, after a slight reaction when we first gain independence, we usually manage to become more or less worthy of our capabilities and training. In this, as in other matters, the long view is consoling.

In your eleven terms you say you have thrice seen the lecture system attacked, "every time most unintelligently, neither side facing up to the real issues, and both talking at cross purposes." You say you "held your peace and kept your counsel." Did you not imitate the three monkeys in other respects also? May I remind you that in your second year an exhaustive questionnaire was circulated, that the answers were collated and made known to the S.C.R.? You may not have realized that S.C. discussed these with the staff, and that, in the Arts Faculty at least, a staff-student committee held further

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## The Function of the Universities—continued.

our complaints are our own condemnation. Moreover we have a responsibility to all those who should be sharing with us the benefits of a University education. We hold the fort for them and it is our job to see not only that our Universities are never destroyed, but that within the structure of the present system our privileges are extended. For the privileges of students are not the privileges of a class but the privileges of learning itself.

Therefore the students must do every thing in their power to increase their status within the Universities. They must do everything to preserve freedom of discussion and of speech. They must throw off the shackles on their newspapers. The youth of the World looks to them.

They must do away with the travesty of self-government with which they are appeased at the present time. Students must have equal representation in the Senates. The Slogan is Freedom. The Way, Responsibility. But they will never be given either. They must fight for them every inch of the way.

C. MATTHEWS.

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## Anglican Society

To the Editor of "Wessex News."

Dear Sir,

We, the undersigned, are of the opinion that there is a great need in this College for an Anglican Society, and therefore suggest that the Society of that name, now in abeyance, be revived as soon as possible.

Under the constitution, membership is open to all confirmed members of the Church of England, and of bodies in communion with her. It would be well to mention here that the term Anglican does not mean Anglo-Catholic, but embraces every shade of opinion within the Established Church.

The aims of the Society are, briefly, to unite and foster the corporate life of the Anglicans of this College through the medium of Corporate Communion and discussions on vital topics of belief, and to bear witness to our loyalty to Christ and His Church.

It is proposed, therefore, to hold a meeting to discuss the question more fully, on Friday, March 8th, at 1.20 p.m.

This is a matter which concerns every Anglican in the College, so we extend a hearty welcome to any student or member of staff who may be interested.

Yours faithfully,  
H. C. P. BURDEN.  
J. H. LOWE.  
A. JOHNSON.

February 29th, 1940.

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## Correspondence—continued

discussion and has recorded concrete suggestions. Last session the Development Committee, at a series of meetings with our President, Vice-President and Secretary, again discussed the matter, not, I think, without profit to both sides. For the duration of this discussion we agreed to suspend action in Union and Faculties. Subsequent conditions have temporarily shelved the question. I do not pretend that we have not much more ground to cover before staff and student opinion coincide, nor that our discussions have yet borne visible fruit, but I insist, sir, that your "raising the question" was not a resurrection from the dead, and that therefore you should not ignore previous efforts. May I further direct you to the researches and policy of N.U.S. in this respect? I think you will find there that you are not a lone Quixote, and that your windmills are already crumbling. If you decide to prosecute your case further it might be as well to remember that most of us admit inequality in our lecturers—so do not dispose of all of them at once. Also, it is difficult to judge the whole "lecture system," as it operates in the different departments of the four faculties, from the confines of a single department. This I write for the warning of Freshmen, who, lured by your subtle flattery, might too readily assume the last word spoken. In conclusion may I commend to your re-reading and consideration A. C. M.'s excellent article on "Ways and Degrees."

Sir, I congratulate you. You have achieved your object; for here is something which will at least fill space, so that you may even feel justified in writing an editorial of more normal length next week. Perhaps you may go so far as to reassume the austere and judicious editorial "we," if only for the purpose of my more thorough castigation.

Yours, etc.,

JEAN A. M. OLIVER.

## Correspondence—continued

To the Editor of "Wessex News."

Connaught Hall,

29th February, 1940.

Dear Sir,

I have been very disappointed with the two N.U.S. meetings held so far. The first was on "World Order," a subject that was barely touched upon. Any such discussion must centre upon the League of Nations, which was the first conscious effort by nations to establish World Order. It failed; yet many people still support it and hope for a lasting peace in a new League, Federal Union. Mr. Matthews suggested why it failed, and why Federal Union would fail. The discussion should then have been for or against this claim, with suggestions as to how a Federal Union could be made to succeed. Only then could the discussion be said to be about World Order.

The other meeting about Unemployment was even more scantily treated. Why should there be Unemployment? What talk there was assumed it was a necessity and made suggestions for its amelioration; but the point that Unemployment is an unnecessary evil was never even hinted at. Measures like those suggested will only hide the disease and even encourage it. Unemployment is the outcome of a badly run social system, change this and it will go; there is enough for all, if the superfluity is well distributed.

I am well aware that time at these meetings is limited, but that is all the more reason why time should be spent in tackling problems in a true controversial spirit, the only way the real opinion of the College may be brought to the notice of the delegates for London.

Further I suggest that the controversy be continued in the columns of the *Wessex News*.

Yours truly,

BRIAN SAGER.

The Editor does not necessarily agree with the sentiments expressed in these columns.

## Department of Navigation

From the Department of Navigation comes the following letter, received by the Director from Liverpool. The boy appears to be far more concerned about the delay in his work than by the fact that he was torpedoed.

Dear Sir,

Am enclosing the answers to Paper 6 which I have just completed. You will find the answers mixed up a bit, this is due to the fact that some of the answers which I took away on the S.S. *Protesilaus* to be completed were lost through the sinking of the ship. This also caused delay as they had to be completed on arrival home.

This paper will make me up to date to the 20th of next month, as I send one monthly according to the introduction paper and this I presume is correct.

Yours truly,

With thanks,

J. H. JONES.

## Students' Union

(Held on February 19th).

Balance of £2 7s. 5d. on Engineers' Dance reported.

Mr. Stroud appointed N.U.S. Secretary.

Mr. O'Connor appointed Secretary of the Common Rooms Committee.

It was decided that a Coordinating Committee should be formed from representatives of each organization interested in discussions suggested by N.U.S.

Mr. Campbell Mathews was elected Chairman of this committee.

## The Business Manager

The Business Manager thanks the anonymous donor for the gift of a lady's stocking, and regrets that its partner and contents were not included in the gift.

CHANGE OF DATES.  
IMPORTANT.

Owing to the abrupt ending of term the Union Ball will not take place on the date arranged. An A.U. and Union Ball will be held on Saturday, April 27th, at Connaught Hall. Tickets, 3s. 6d.

## This and That

We understand that all members of Connaught Hall have been placed in quarantine, as a result of an outbreak of spotted fever. This seems to us a needless expense. Surely it would have been cheaper to have them destroyed.

However, we must not complain. At least we now have a *raison d'être* for that side-entrance to College which is almost entirely surrounded by dust-bins, and plainly marked.

ENTRANCE  
FOR  
MALE AND FEMALE  
CONTAMINATED.

It is freely rumoured in some usually well-informed quarters that the UNION BALL will be neither postponed nor cancelled. This optimism seems to us to be excessive. Surely there must be some infectious diseases which have not yet been used.

In this connection, it seems almost criminal negligence to overlook the fact that both Mr. L-ne and Mr. C-mpbell are well known to be far gone in sleeping sickness.

This week's Fairy Story: A Reception Unit is a place where you join the Army.

"College women paint too much," says a daily paper. So that's what happened to the Crest.

It has been suggested that speedier results might be obtained on the new Buildings, if the control were handed over to the C.I.-rk of the W-rks. We rather thought it had been.

We have been asked to deny the report that the Russell Hall Dart Club are forming themselves into a special Anti-Barrage Balloon Battalion. When interviewed on the subject, a prominent member of the Committee said, "The whole thing is preposterous. No Russell Hall man would dream of hitting a balloon when it was down."

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## SPORTS

M.H.C. v. K.A.C. Won 6-1.

College took command, and led 4-0 at the interval. The team tired rapidly afterwards through lack of training, and K.A.C. reduced the arrears with a simple goal which should never have been scored. College hit back, however, and the final result was 6-1.

Two freshers were playing and both did well. Kane dominated the centre of the field and distributed the ball with fine judgment. Sloper showed cleverness and opportunism, and his second goal was brilliant—a flick from a difficult angle while on the run.

Lane regained his best form with a hat-trick, and Sager maintained his average of one goal per match.

The defence was capable, but missed chances spoil the clever play of the forwards. Cleaner hitting is needed by all players.

M.H.C. v. PIRELLI GENERAL. Lost 1-2.

The game was scrappy, and few good movements finished well. College led 1-0 at the interval, from a goal by Sager after a melee in the goalmouth.

Pirelli's later equalised, and late in the game gained the lead, and repeated College attacks in the last ten minutes were unavailing.

The goalkeeper shone in this match; Hale played very well, and the opposing "keeper" foiled the good efforts of our forward line. The defence on the whole was not showing convincing form—closer marking is needed, and the halves did not link up the forwards and defence at all well. Reed went off near the end with a damaged knee, and Pirelli's took advantage of this gap.

U.C.S. v. King Alfred's. Lost 1-3. (Played on February 21st)

College were defeated by a team that was undoubtedly superior in every way. The Winchester men were probably the Soccer club's strongest opponents of the few games played this season. There might have been a cricket score but for the usual

strong football of George White and Alan Derbyshire (who returned to the team for the first time this season).

College opened play in the Winchester goal-mouth, both wings successfully making attempts, until Magraw was able to net after receiving the ball in the midst of a crowd of players. The goal was the well-merited result of a number of quick, well-placed passes of the forwards—an unusual feature, strongly emphasising the ensuing incoherent efforts of the forwards' movements.

Wallace was given no opportunity to confound the Winchester defence: in fact, the movements of the left wing met with an immediate check before it was able to get off the mark.

Winchester equalised before half-time, and added two more goals in their favour during the rest of the game. Play centred in the middle of the field after the first two goals, and Winchester made good use of the openings afforded by a harassed and over-worked defence; the ball rarely advanced beyond the College half-backs, who, whether through the opportunism of Winchester or because of bad-positioning of College inside forwards, failed to contact their front line that was standing easy for lengthy periods.

Saturday, March 2nd. U.C.S. v. Worthy Down. Lost 4-2.

## RUGGER CLUB.

RUGGER CLUB v. FOLLAND AIRCRAFT. Won 29-0.

In the game with Folland Aircraft the Rugger Club displayed its relief at escaping from talk of epidemics, quarantine and "contact" cases by playing with the freedom and energy of which it is always capable but which are rarely seen.

There was a scratch team composed entirely of Hall men, due to isolation difficulties, which made the brilliant combination displayed all the more remarkable.

The team was too strong for Folland and from full-back to hooker College held the whip-hand.

The forwards showed fine understanding with the backs, and special mention must be made of the positional play of Burden, who never failed to be in support of the man in possession. The defence was never in danger of being overworked, as the strong tackling of Studd and Morrow in the centre nipped any dangerous moves in the bud.

After twenty minutes College began to settle down and applied strong pressure. Smith brought his Soccer skill to bear, by showing us a well-controlled dribble, ending it by opportunely gathering and going over in the corner.

The strength of the right wing naturally caused all movements to

develop in that direction, but straight plunges down the centre were sacrificed for aimless running to touch. It was the right wing which started the movement leading up to the second try, but the ball was eventually handled by more than half the team, before Burden went over near the posts.

In the second half College, while taking things easily, never failed to neglect a scoring opportunity. Gibson was proving an admirable link between forwards and backs and the three-quarters were given every opportunity. Folland could not hope to withstand the continuous pressure and the College backs took turns in scoring.

## NETBALL CLUB.

Pirelli 15, U.C.S. 11.

This was a most disappointing match—the lack of combination among the team was really remarkable. Play was individual and generally poor and scrappy. A good deal of blame must be laid at the door of sickness. Most of the team had recently risen from their beds in order to play, and as a result were unfit.

College held Pirelli quite well until half-time, but they seemed to lose all fighting spirit and play became lethargic and uninteresting, giving a final score of 15-11 to Pirelli. This score was likely to have been a good deal higher if Pirelli's shooters had been up to the standard of their really excellent defences.

U.C.S. 9, Reading 9.

The low scoring gives some indication of the bad weather conditions under which this match was played. The sun was shining brightly and the wind blowing hard, and these two factors combined gave the shooters of both sides a bad time.

At first College failed to appreciate the difficulty of playing under such weather conditions, and our usual long passes were worse than useless.

Reading was generally quicker on the ball than U.C.S. The centre court players do not seem to realize that when they have temporarily lost the ball the idea is to run after it and try to recapture it—not to stand still in the middle of the field and relapse into a daydream. They are much too slow when taking balls on. Many times they waited until the attacks were well covered by the defence before they passed.

A word of praise must be given to the work done by the centre and the defences, who played an excellent game.

On the whole it was an exciting game. U.C.S. was leading at half-time 6-5, but it was a ding-dong struggle most of the way, and Reading equalised just before the final whistle.

Won 4, Drawn 1, Lost 4. Goals for 149; goals against, 99.

## HOCKEY.

v. Winchester Rifle Depot. Lost 3-0.

Students Abroad—continued.

quaint ceremony at the end of the harvest, when the harvesters recited verses and tied garlands of flowers round our arms.

There was, however, something ominous in the fact that the harvest was to be finished by August 15th. There was also something ominous in the many companies of soldiers who marched through the village in the direction of the eastern frontier, in the long procession of field ambulances which we met one day when coming back from a walk, and in the notice on every gate—"Schutzraum, 2 (or 3, 4 or 5) personen"—a testimony to the efficiency of the German Air Raid Precautions. There was a tension in the air of which the newspapers gave no sign. Then there came the speech of the Nazi agent in Danzig, which ended with the singing of "Deutschland über alles" by a frenzied and almost hysterical crowd. Finally, the pact with Russia. It was soon after this that I decided regretfully to leave Germany, though my holiday should have lasted another month. And even as my friends waved me off from the station they were still smiling at my unnecessary anxiety and quite convinced in their own minds that the Fuhrer would find a means of averting this crisis as he had done so many times before.

I. OADES.

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